

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001820/24
to the Commission
Gerald Hauser (P/E)
(25 September 2024)**

Subject: Censorship on MEPs corporate devices

Parliament uses Blue Coat to censor the derstatus.at ⁽¹⁾ on the devices of EU staff and Members of the European Parliament. As the Washington Post brought to light back in 2013, Blue Coat is used to censor the Internet for citizens in Syria, Russia, China and Iran, as well as in a number of other countries. ⁽²⁾ Blue Coat was sold to Symantec a few years ago. Symantec in turn belongs to the US Silicon Valley group Broadcom. By April 2024, several EU antitrust authorities, as well as the Commission, had Broadcom itself in their crosshairs. At issue were allegations of twelvefold price increases and extortion! ⁽³⁾

The European Parliament itself employs the American censorship tool used in ‘autocratic states’ around the world to restrict citizens’ freedom of information. Reporters Without Borders classed Blue Coat as one of the top 3 enemies of the Internet, alongside the NSA tool PRISM.

1. Does the Commission use similar software on the equipment issued to Commissioners and Commission staff?
2. Is the website derstatus.at ⁽⁴⁾ also blocked by the Commission for Commissioners and Commission staff?
3. If so, is the Commission informed of the list of websites blocked by the software?

Submitted: 25.9.2024

**Answer given by Mr Serafin on behalf of the European Commission
(3 January 2025)**

The Commission has several technical systems in place to protect and safeguard its digital workplace infrastructure from harm and misuse. These systems include a web filtering proxy and other solutions provided by leading providers in the industry.

The ‘Der Status’ website is not restricted within the Commission, and news websites from various political perspectives are also accessible.

The relevant departments in the Commission address staff concerns about inappropriate blocking of content and can modify the filtering system settings.

This filtering system categorizes websites broadly and allows exceptions. Blocked websites typically include those with addictive or non-work-related content, such as adult websites, online games, and gambling platforms.

¹ www.derstatus.at

² https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/report-web-monitoring-devices-made-by-us-firm-blue-coat-detected-in-iran-sudan/2013/07/08/09877ad6-e7cf-11e2-a301-ea5a8116d211_story.html

³ <https://www.derstandard.at/story/3000000216474/eu-kommission-nimmt-broadcom-wegen-vmware-ins-visier>

⁴ www.derstatus.at